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Jesus was not what he said, but his personality. Most of his ethical teachings can be duplicated from the great religions of the world. His uniqueness was in the spirit and character of the life he lived. The whole life of the child is imitation or response to personality. With this true the keystone of religious education is the personality of the teacher. The home, parents, priest, all are important, but in the conditions under which we live today the most of religious education is and must be done by the teacher if it is done at all. "A few years ago a noted aviator, who has since lost his life, took an old abandoned aeroplane which nobody had been able to operate, and flew around Staten Island with it as if it had been a powerful Bleriot. When he landed he remarked, 'You can fly a kitchen table if you have the right kind of a motor.' So it is with the Sunday school. If you have the right kind of teachers you can run your Sunday school with a Mother Goose book." But to secure competent teachers you must provide adequate teacher-training.

#### **The Church College and the School in the Local Church**

The *Pilgrim Magazine of Religious Education* has a department designated "An Open Forum in Religious Education," which is conducted by Professor Walter S. Athearn. In the January issue there is a discussion of the church college and the school in the local church. Attention is directed first to the fact that the church colleges of the United States are built on the public schools. In co-operation with

state colleges they assist in establishing entrance requirements and defining units of credit, teaching conditions, qualifications for teachers, etc. It is through this process that the high schools have become standardized.

Today there is a nation-wide demand for the standardization of Bible-study. In more than twenty states the North Dakota plan has been introduced in some form. Bible-study conducted under church auspices is asking for academic rating by public high schools and state colleges. To what agency should we look for the standardization of Bible-study? Is it not the business of the church college? Why should not the church colleges be built on the church schools? Why should not the church colleges do for the schools in the local church what they help to do for the public schools? Why should they not determine teaching conditions, supervise organization and administration, fix units of credit, and establish teacher-training standards? Professor Athearn asks: "Will not some member of the Council of the Church Boards of Education explain to the readers of the Open Forum why church colleges do nothing to standardize the local church schools, why they are silent when the church schools are asking for academic credit, and why the Council of Church Boards of Education has done nothing to improve the quantity or quality of biblical teaching in church colleges? Do Church Boards of Education exist to assist in developing a system of secular schools under church management to compete with state schools, or do they have a specific service to the church and the cause of religious education?"

## **CHURCH EFFICIENCY**

#### **A Forward Step for Baptist Sunday Schools**

By direction of the International Lesson Committee the "Uniform Series of Sunday School Lessons" is discontinued. In its place beginning with January, 1918, is

offered an "Improved Uniform Series." This is a significant forward step in the work of the Sunday school in the Baptist denomination. The *Watchman-Examiner*, January 3, comments on this editorially. In the former lesson-plan there was one title, one

Scripture selection, and one golden text for the use of all from babies to grandfathers. Important portions of the Bible were selected and arranged to be used in a cycle of six years. In the "Improved Uniform Series of International Sunday School Lessons" now offered there is a general theme, Scripture lesson, and golden text. There is also additional Bible material for teachers and four separate lesson titles for primary, junior, intermediate and young people, and adult groups. Additional Bible material is provided for each of these groups. For each of the first two groups a special memory verse is selected. The cycle of six years in the old scheme is supplanted in the new by a cycle of eight years or two half-cycles of four years each.

The new series carries many improvements, some of the most important of which are as follows: "(1) In an eight-year cycle of lessons more of the Bible is covered than in a six-year cycle, and also more and more varied Bible material is provided for each lesson. (2) Provision is made during the eight years for a number of topical studies with miscellaneous Scripture references, such as a series of lessons on the Christian life, church history, missions, temperance, and community service. (3) Adaptation to the several age groups by use of separate titles and biblical material better suited to the nature and needs of pupils in those groups. This adaptation is through a modification of the general Bible passage by use of fewer or more verses, or by substitution of entirely different Bible material, as is often the case in primary lessons to get a story for children." These improved lesson helps are published and distributed by the American Baptist Publication Society.

#### **Industrial Parish Work**

The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian church, under the direction of William P. Shriver, operates a Department

of Immigrant and City Work. From a copy of a report made from this department to the Board, we observe that in ministering to the recent immigrant the approach is from the community standpoint, i.e., the immigrant is dealt with, not detached from, but in relation to, his environing community. Knit up with the community in which he lives is his life, his progress, his welfare, and that of his family. Therefore the work of the church in any given immigrant community must be developed on a comprehensive scale. "It calls for a sympathetic understanding of the previous life and social and religious traditions of the immigrant, and at the same time demands that we introduce him to the best this country has in civic, social, and religious ideals." This principle has inspired a new form of religious ministry conducted by the Presbyterian Home Board. It is designated "industrial parish work." This work is now operating in no less than nine important industrial communities where the new immigrant is a large population factor.

The method of this work is, first, to survey the community as a whole. Next, a program is formulated which undertakes to federate all existing Presbyterian churches and agencies and which seeks to inspire them with a spirit adequate for the task of ministering to their immigrant neighbors. This federation is organized and operated through a parish council. All workers are chosen with particular reference to the immigrant adult and child life. Among these are both foreign-speaking workers and American men and women. All of them meet in regular conference, plan their work jointly, and co-operate thoroughly with one another. Through parish headquarters common facilities are made available, such as a stereopticon service, parish paper, and summer camp. With a sound co-ordination of all Presbyterian forces this church is better prepared for its own task and for co-operation with other churches

and with civic and social agencies. A demonstration industrial parish was established in 1916 in the Iron River Mining District of Michigan. The work is conducted also in two other iron mining communities in this country, viz., the Range Parish in Minnesota and the Gogebic Parish in Wisconsin and Michigan. It is noted further that very encouraging progress has been made in the Cherokee-Crawford Parish in a coal-mining community of ninety thousand population in southeastern Kansas. This industrial-parish scheme seems to be a very significant adventure in the field of home missions.

#### **An Event in Religious Journalism**

Recently the *Congregationalist*, Boston, and the *Advance*, Chicago, were combined into one journal to be issued hereafter as the *Congregationalist and Advance*. The editor of the *Watchman-Examiner*, November 29, comments on this as an important and interesting event in the field of American religious journalism. More and more the national point of view is triumphing over sectional spirit. Furthermore, this combination is the result of the simple fact that leaders of the Congregational churches in this country believe that their six thousand churches can be served by one paper better than by two. It is but another evidence of the tendency within Congregationalism "toward unification and the better co-ordination of all its working agencies." The rejoicing of the denominational leaders in this achievement is especially noticeable. "The merger is in line with the general trend of American religious journalism as shown by the combination of the *Watchman*, of Boston, and the *Examiner*, of New York, and the *Commonwealth*, of Philadelphia, and by the absorption of the *Westminster*, of Philadelphia, into the *Continent*, of Chicago, and the even more recent combination of the *Unitarian Advance*, of Illinois, and the *Christian Register*, of Boston,

which has just been accomplished." These changes have not come about because of any decline of the influence of the religious press, but in the interest of increased efficiency in the midst of conditions as they are today. The editor-in-chief of the *Congregationalist and Advance* is Dr. Howard A. Bridgman, well and favorably known as the editor of the *Congregationalist* for the last six years.

#### **Looking toward Unity**

An international convention of the Disciples was held a few weeks ago in Kansas City. The editor of the *Christian Work*, December 1, declares that the most significant chapter in that convention was its Christian unity session. In this there were received official deputations from (1) the Presbyterian church, from which the Disciples came about one hundred years ago; (2) the Congregationalists, with whom the Disciples have much similarity in origin and purpose; (3) the Christians, with whom the Disciples were most closely associated in their earlier history. The closing address of the occasion was delivered by Bishop C. P. Anderson, D.D., Protestant Episcopal bishop of Chicago. These official deputations were guests at a banquet on Saturday evening. On Sunday they addressed an audience of ten thousand in Convention Hall. The enthusiasm was exceptional. Such occasions mark progress on the way to permanent cordial and friendly relations. "The time must come when prejudice is to give away to reason and believers in Jesus are to find in each other common brothers of the common faith." We are face to face with problems that are far more serious than our petty differences. The issues that confront us now cannot be met by sectarian or party programs. The only way to ultimate triumph is through the spirit of greatness operating in a united church. Its unfriendly divisions are Christianity's greatest weakness.